

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MOSCOW 00151 051321Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00
INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03
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HA-05 IO-13 OIC-02 ACDA-12 TRSE-00 /095 W
-----074624 051326Z /44

O R 051250Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 6322
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

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PLEASE PASS AMBASSADOR GOLDBERG

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: CSCE, UR, IN
SUBJECT: VORONTSOV APPOINTMENT

REF: STATE 1737

1. WE HAVE NOT YET BEEN ABLE TO GLEAN ANYTHING FROM SOVIET
OFFICIALS ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF VORONTSOV'S APPOINTMENT
TO NEW DELHI AS IT RELATES TO THE BRLGRADE TALKS. WE ARE
ALSO NOT REPEAT NOT OPTIMISTIC THAT SOVIETS WILL BE PRE-
PARED TO GIVE VERY USEFUL AND CANDID ANSWERS ON THIS
SCORE. YUGOSLAV DCM SAYS HIS EMBASSY HAS NOTHING SOLID
FROM SOVIETS BUT THAT BELGRADE HAS THE IMPRESSION THAT
VORONTSOV WILL RETURN.

2. EMBOFF DID DISCUSS VORONTSOV APPOINTMENT WITH SOVIET
MFA SOUTH ASIAN DEPT. CHIEF BOLDYREV JAN 3. BOLDYREV
REFUSED TO SAY ANYTHING OTHER THAN VORONTSOV'S APPOINTMENT
TO DELHI DOES NOT REPRESENT A DOWNGRADING OF INDIA
IN SOVIET EYES, EVEN THOUGH VORONTSOV'S PREDECESSOR
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MALTSEV IS A FULL MEMBER OF THE CPSU CC AND VORONTSOV
IS NOT EVEN A CANDIDATE MEMBER. MALTSEV HAS LEFT
DELHI AND IS NOW SERVING IN MFA AS ONE OF TWO FIRST
DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTERS. THE INDIAN EMBASSY HERE
STATES IT HAS NO INDICATION OF VORONTSOV'S
ETA, NEW DELHI.

3. WHILE WE WOULD WISH TO DEFER FINAL ANALYSIS OF VORONTSOV'S REASSIGNMENT PENDING ACQUISITION OF MORE INFORMATION, WE WOULD NEVERTHELESS POINT OUT THAT MOSCOW LOOKS ON INDIA AS AN IMPORTANT ALLY IN ASIA AND THE THIRD WORLD, AN ALLY IN WHICH IT HAS INVESTED A GREAT DEAL. VORONTSOV IS THEREFORE GOING TO ONE OF THE MORE IMPORTANT AND PRESTIGIOUS SOVIET POSTS ABROAD. IT IS ALSO NOTEWORTHY THAT HIS APPOINTMENT IS UNUSUALLY CHALLENGING, COMING AT A TIME WHEN INDIAN DOMESTIC POLITICS MAY BE ENTERING A PERIOD OF FLUX AND POSSIBLE REALIGNMENTS FOLLOWING MRS. GANDHI'S SPLITTING OF THE CONGRESS PARTY. DURING HIS LONG TENURE IN THE U.S., VORONTSOV WAS PARTICULARLY SKILLFUL AND ENERGETIC IN REPRESENTING THE SOVIET VIEWPOINT IN EXCELLENT ENGLISH TO A WIDE VARIETY OF AUDIENCES. MOSCOW WILL COUNT ON HIM TO DO THE SAME IN DELHI, WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF PRESERVING AND STRENGTHENING SOVIET INFLUENCE AND THE GOOD WILL ENTERTAINED BY MANY INDIANS TOWARD THE SOVIET UNION DURING A FLUID PERIOD IN INDIAN POLITICS.

MATLOCK

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